

Communique – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Partnership Meeting

12, 13 March 2024

The fifth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy Partnership (LPP) meeting was held in Naarm/ Melbourne on 12 and 13 March at the Koorie Heritage Trust.

A key theme of the meeting was the need to act urgently to stop the loss of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Members highlighted the need for long term reform to take place alongside immediate action and investment moving into the second year of Partnership.

The meeting was opened with an acknowledgment of Country, and the group received a presentation from Rosales Martinez, CEO of the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL), the peak body for Aboriginal Languages in Victoria. VACL operates through a human rights and social justice framework with sovereignty and self-determination at the core of its vision and work.

The LPP Co-Chairs provided administrative updates, including reports on activities of the LPP Data Working Group and the upcoming Languages Sector Strengthening Plan, an initiative under priority reform two of Closing the Gap. The leadership group then provided reflections and reports on progress within the partnership.

The key business on day one focused on the identified national priorities of the LPP and immediate work to take up against the priorities. The group received a presentation on the results of the online survey on the identified priorities and formally agreed to and affirmed the seven priorities of the LPP. They are:

- Languages legislation
- Bringing language home to the people and communities
- More funding that goes where communities need it
- Supporting the people, groups and organisations who work in languages
- Speaking and using languages
- Access to Country
- Help people understand the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages

On the second day, the LPP workshopped decision-making processes underpinning LPP jurisdictional positioning, representation, and responsive action. The group then focused on its high-level year two work plan, approved its content, and discussed specific actions and priorities, including preparations to begin recommendations to the Joint Council.

The group considered and approved a proposed scope to initiate evaluation development work for the partnership. Then the group travelled to the Melbourne Museum to hold the afternoon sessions, which included consideration of LPP logo development and future Joint Council and LPP meetings. The next LPP meeting will be held in June 2024, with precise dates to be determined subject to scoping and agreement.

Meeting attendee list

Coalition of Peaks representatives	
Karina Lester	Mobile Language Unit
Vicki Couzens	Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages
Karen Paterson	First Nations Media
Daisy Allen on behalf of Heather Sculthorpe	Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
Beau Williams	First Languages Australia (Co-Chair)
Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives	
Patsy Ngalu Bedford	Independent
Daryn McKenny	Independent
Leitha Assan	Independent
Samantha Armstrong	Independent
Gulwanyang Moran	Independent
Government representatives	
Shelagh Magadza, on behalf of Erin Gauntlett	Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries, Western Australian Government
Jazlie Davis, on behalf of Clare McHugh	Aboriginal Languages Trust, New South Wales Government
Denise Andrews, on behalf of Kathy Parton	Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts, Queensland Government
Stephen Fraser	Department of Education, Victorian Government
Jodee Wilson	Department of Education, Children and Young People, Tasmanian Government
Deonne Smith	Department for Education, South Australian Government
Brendan Moyle	Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, ACT Government
Stephen Arnott	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication, and the Arts, Commonwealth Government (Co-Chair)
Dorelle Anderson	Central Australia and Territory Regional Growth Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet